



Litter Picks

Electronic Newsletter

October 2007

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Enhancement

P.O. Box 1105, Richmond, Virginia 23218. (804) 698-4055 Fax (804) 698-4224.

DEQ's Community Involvement Initiative: The Department of Environmental Quality is dedicated to helping the public better understand DEQ's role in protecting the environment, and to involving the public more effectively in environmental decision making.

Welcome to Litter Picks, a look at litter prevention news in the Commonwealth and across the nation. We hope that some of this information is helpful to you in your programs, and hope you'll help us with news from your area related to litter prevention and awareness. Had a successful clean up event? Recognized companies or citizens for their clean up efforts? Let us know by sending this information to Sheila Barnett at

smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov.

Assign-a-Highway News

In the October edition of the Assign-a-Highway newsletter, Bobby Justus, the Assign-a-Highway Manager for Virginia announced that there are 28 Assign-a-Highway programs operating in Virginia. In the past year, there have been 9,498 probationers who have cleaned 6,713 miles of roads. They have collected 61,309 bags of trash which equates to approximately 3,096 tons! By using probationers to pick up litter, the local governments have saved 59,816 man hours of paid labor. If people were paid minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour, the savings equates to approximately \$308,000.

Assign-a-Highway has spread from Southwest Virginia to the Eastern Shore. Counties, towns and cities have all experienced success with the program. Localities modify the program to meet their local needs. For example, instead of requiring that a probationer clean up a road, some localities have them clean city blocks or parking lots instead.

For more information about Assign-a-Highway, contact Bobby Justus at (276) 628-1600 or bjustus_assignahighway@yahoo.com

Keep Virginia Beautiful Award Recipients

Keep Virginia Beautiful held an awards luncheon on October 10, 2007 in Richmond. **Assign-a-Highway** won first place as a non-profit/civic/community organization for their waste-reduction efforts. **Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful** won first place for their litter prevention program efforts.

Under waste reduction, **Henrico and Spotsylvania County** took first place as government agencies for their Quest for a Clean Community. **Frederick County** won second place for its Plastic Bag Challenge.

The awards were presented by the Secretary of Natural Resources, The Honorable Preston Bryant.

For more information, contact the Executive Director of Keep Virginia Beautiful, Robert L. Hundley at (804) 355-0084.

Are You Interested in Participating in a Clean Virginia Waterways Program?

If so, then check out the list of sites in Virginia that are hosting river cleanups this fall. Go to:

<http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/iccsitesva07.htm>

Natural Resources Conservation Week

Natural Resources Conservation week is October 14 – 20, 2007 and the theme is "Litter Wise."

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation has links to many litter and recycling lessons that can be used to promote environmental awareness. Visit their web site at: www.vaswcd.org/natresources.htm

VCLPR Accepting Nominations

The Virginia Council for Litter Prevention and Recycling is looking for officers to serve in the upcoming two years. The new officers will take their respective offices beginning in January, 2008.

If you are interested in serving as an officer or would like to nominate someone, please contact one of the following people:

Rosemary Byrne, 703-324-5471 or cleanfairfax1@aol.com

Megan Brown, 804-501-4502, Ext. 4 or

bro77@co.henrico.va.us

Ann Masters, 540-345-5523 or ann@cleanvalley.org

Blacksburg's Pilot Adopt-a-Block Program

On Saturday, October 13, 2007, about a dozen volunteers planned to meet at the Lyric Theatre on College Avenue for the first in a series of community cleanups. Dirty streets and fliers litter the downtown vicinity.

The pick up was organized by a group called Citizens First. Concerned citizens hope that by holding weekly cleaning events, and by developing a monitoring system, that downtown will be revitalized and more people will want to come downtown.

For more information about the Adopt-a-Block program in Blacksburg, contact Citizen's First by sending them an email from their website:

<http://www.citizensfirstforblacksburg.org/>

Cover Your Load in Chesterfield County

On Saturday, October 13, 2007, Pam Cooper, the Litter Program Manager and Deputy Sheriffs greeted visitors who came to the landfills. They educated people about load covering by showing a picture about securing loads properly and gave them fliers with information.

Beginning October 20, 2007, Chesterfield police will be ticketing drivers who fail to properly secure their loads.

For more information about Chesterfield's Secure Your Load Campaign, contact Pam Cooper at 804-751-2227 or cooperp@chesterfield.gov

Litter Picks Continued

Cigarette Butt Awareness Campaign

The **Prince William Clean Community Council** held a cigarette butt collection contest as a kickoff to the Council's cigarette litter awareness campaign. The goal of the contest was to make the community more aware of the effects of cigarette butts on the environment. The Council is striving to change the behaviors of smokers who throw their butts from car windows or toss their butts on the ground or in streams.

The winner of the contest was Miss Hala Mimms, a student at Freedom Senior High School. She collected 10 pounds of cigarette butts over the course of two months.

The Council produced a postcard size cigarette butt fact sheet that is being distributed throughout the County.

For more information about this campaign, contact Brenda Evans at (703) 792-6272 or bevans@pwcleanCouncil.org

Free Reusable Bags

Litter Program Manager of **Chesterfield County**, Pamela Cooper, urges the citizens of Chesterfield County to bring their own bags to the grocery store. By bringing one's own bags to the store, it will reduce the number of plastic bags that become trash and get loose into the environment. Reusable bags also save natural resources.

Ms. Cooper has free reusable bags available to citizens in the county. Contact Ms. Cooper at 804-751-2227 or cooperp@chesterfield.gov

Fall Cleanup of the James River

Friends of the James River, **Keep Nelson Beautiful** and the Blue Ridge Sierra Club organized a clean up of the James River on September 8, 2007. With the summer's drought, it was easier for crews to find and remove debris from the river and its shores.

There are two James River Regional Cleanups scheduled each year. The next one is scheduled for June 14, 2008 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The statistics from the 2007 cleanups are encouraging. JRAC states that 52 boats, rafts, canoes or kayaks assisted in the cleanups. There was a 66% decrease from 2006 cleanups in the amount of aluminum taken from the James River.

For more information, contact Kimberly Conley, Executive Director of the JRAC at (804) 748-1567 or conleyk@chesterfield.gov

Grant Opportunities and Environmental Excellence Awards

Visit the Virginia Naturally website to learn about grant funding opportunities for your local environmental programs. Go to: www.vanaturally.com/grants.html

Disclaimer: Reference in this publication to any specific business, commercial product, process or service by trade name, trademark or otherwise does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality or any other state government agency.

Contracting with Jail is Less Expensive for Montgomery County

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office has reported that inmates have picked up alongside U.S. 460, Interstate 81 ramps at mile marker 114 and 118 since August 16, 2007 and have collected 3.29 tons of trash.

A private contractor, Infrastructure Corporation of America received a grant to maintain several highways which include pothole and guardrail repair, snow removal and trash pickup. Contracting with the Sheriff's Office for inmate trash pickups has been less expensive than paying contractors to pick up the trash and it has allowed ICA employees to do more of other types of work that need to be done alongside the roads. The inmates may volunteer to do the pickups. In return for their service, they get a bigger lunch on work days and get 4 ½ days per month off of their sentences.

Montgomery County jail is the first jail in the Roanoke and New River valleys that ICA has partnered with to do litter pickups. Jason Massie, a supervisor in ICA's Roanoke Office believes that this is a win-win situation and that the program could be expanded to include other localities.

For more information about ICA, visit their website at <http://ica-onramp.com/index.html> or call the Roanoke ICA office at (866) 744-3331 or the Williamsburg office at (888) 786-0070. For the Sheriff of Montgomery County, contact J. T. 'Tommy' Whitt at whittjt@ntelos.net or (540) 382-6906

Attracting Attention to Where the Trash Goes

Keep Norfolk Beautiful invited campers at the Annunciation Cathedral program to participate in a social art project this summer – decorating trash barrels in Lafayette Park. About 30 summer campers painted 10 trash barrels, adding a splash of color to the park which also made the trash barrels more noticeable. KNB hopes that the beautiful barrels will encourage people to properly handle their trash and put their trash in the barrels. For more information, contact Holly Carson at (757) 441-1347 or holly.carson@norfolk.gov

Chesterfield County's Assign-a-Highway Prototype Success

Chesterfield County hired Alan Collette to serve as Chesterfield County's first non-deputized litter officer. He works with Community Corrections and Juvenile Justice in assigning probationers to specific areas of the county to remove litter. Chesterfield County is trying out a proto-type Assign-a-Highway Program to go before the justice board for consideration and approval on November 20, 2007. Mr. Collate has had four probationers clean up 5,500 pounds of litter along 38 miles of roadway in Chesterfield County.

Mr. Collette assists Pam Cooper, the Litter Program Manager for Chesterfield County, with educating the public about litter laws and the impacts of illegal dumping on the environment. His mission is to modify citizen's littering habits and encourage pride in the community.

For more information, contact Pam Cooper at (804) 751-2227 or cooperp@chesterfield.gov